U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION

Reinvention Laboratory Program

BACKGROUND

Reinvention laboratories are experimental projects that field test innovative ways of conducting business. Labs provide the opportunity to shift the paradigm from, we've always done it this way" to "let's try a new way that might work better". Reinvention labs empower front-line workers to take risks and try something different for the sake of efficiency and improved customer service. Labs consist of employee self-managed teams from various parts of an organization who field test innovative practices.

Innovation Begins With Exploring Ideas!

COLLABORATION

As the Department implements its ONE DOT policy of "working better together", organizations are afforded the opportunity to engage in a number of cross-agency experiments to enhance operational efficiency, and create new and improved ways of doing business. This team dynamic (in certain cases) incorporates expertise from different agencies and is recognized as a valuable approach for addressing problem-solving and change. Laboratories allow for structured, manageable experimentation.

The DOT Senior Leadership Team is committed to good management and innovation that results from listening to, exploring, and implementing employees ideas and suggestions. As we move ahead, plan and prepare ourselves to meet the many transportation challenges of the new millennium, it is imperative that we transform programs, systems and processes that will support and undergird the management objectives and reform initiatives that are defined in our strategic plan.

ONE DOT
WORKING BETTER TOGETHER

CUSTOMERS ARE OUR BUSINESS

In this rapidly changing age of technology, operations must be streamlined in order for us to keep up with the challenge of new demands. This tool also enables employees to be more responsible and accountable for their work and productivity. Involvement in labs increases employee decision-making authority and directly contributes to creating a government that works better and costs less.

GENERAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR LABS:

- To support — common sense government, cutting red tape, employee empowerment, regulatory reform and improved customer service.

- Develop and promote multi-modal (and in certain cases multi-agency) experimental prototypes and other pilot projects.

- Provide a framework to develop and test innovative improvement initiatives.

- Improve DOT operations, efficiency, and customer service delivery.

- Encourage and develop innovative employees and practices.

- Publicize change by promoting and recognizing success.

The duration for lab experiments is approximately 24 months, however, there are no required time constraints and many labs run indefinitely as new organizational experiments evolve during the process.

EXISTING DOT LABORATORIES

- **ONE DOT Procurement Reinvention Lab** - Created to improve both the Federal-wide & DOT acquisition systems. There are currently 31 experiments in the lab.

- **ONE DOT Information Technology Reinvention Lab** - Operating administrations through partnership with the Secretary's Management Council have demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement through innovative risk-taking by developing an IT reinvention laboratory center.

- **USCG Deepwater Capabilities Replacement Project Lab** - Designing system to meet specific performance requirements, this streamlined performance-based acquisition will meet Coast Guard operational requirements in the deepwater environment while minimizing total operating costs.

- **FAA Logistics Center (FAALC) Lab** - Exemplifies the benefits of streamlining work processes and continuously adapting private industry practices. Committed to high quality standards and 100% customer satisfaction, this organization was the first FAA organization to meet the tough international standards of becoming ISO 9002 certified.

- **FHWA Electronic Signature Authority Lab** - Allows states and the FHWA to sign and approve documents for Federal-aid highway projects electronically. Fund transfers occur through the U.S. Treasury's electronic system. Similar arrangements are being tested or used in other modal administrations.

- **Secure Electronic Network for Travelers' Rapid Inspection (SENTRI) Lab** - Led by the Department of Justice, working in partnership with the Departments of Transportation, Treasury and the FBI, this is the world's first deployed, secure, automated process that inspects international travelers driving into the United States. SENTRI uses Automated Vehicle Identification and other technologies to enable pre-screened travelers to enter the U.S. without delay.

- **North American Route Program (NRP)** - Established a partnership between FAA and system users to improve the overall effectiveness of the National Airspace System. The Program enables aircraft to fly on user-preferred routes, which generates "time" and "fuel" savings.

- **USCG Yard Lab, Baltimore, MD** - Numerous continuous performance improvement initiatives are underway. Teams are committed to Total Quality Management and Malcolm Baldrige principles and maintain an entrepreneurial and customer focus.

- **USCG Aircraft Repair & Supply Center Lab** - Reinvented their organization and streamlined the product line for the overhaul and supply of HH-60J helicopters. Efforts have dramatically cut the time associated with airframe overhaul, repair parts response, and reduced inventory costs. Customers are experiencing improved cost savings and more efficient service.

- **USCG Merchant Mariner Licensing and Documentation System (MMLD) Lab** - Developed to facilitate the process of recording and retrieving information needed to manage the licensing and documentation of U.S. merchant seaman. The re-engineered system is scheduled for deployment in FY 2000.

For specific information on becoming a lab, please refer to the reinvention lab questions and answers